

## **The Freshwater Fishes of Europe, Volume 9: Threatened Fishes of Europe**

By Anton Lelek. 1987. AULA-Verlag, Wiesbaden, West Germany. 343 pp., illus. DM236.

This volume covers 19 families of European freshwater fishes with 107 species and subspecies having accounts out of a total of 200. There is no explanation why some species are omitted. Some omitted species are common while others are of restricted distribution. One can only assume there is a lack of data for these particular species.

Each considered species is placed in a classification "Endangered", "Vulnerable", "Rare", or "Intermediate". The definitions vary in details from the IUCN Red List categories. For example "Endangered" includes "those supposedly extinct". Twenty-five species are classified as "Endangered".

The species accounts include scientific and common names, threatened classification, distinguishing characteristics, worldwide distribution, distribution in Europe, ecology, population in Europe, reasons for decline, conservation measures taken, and conservation measures proposed.

A section at the end of the species accounts gives conservation proposals but is only six pages long. There is a short bibliography in which many of the papers are systematic, ecological, or distributional. Few specifically address the problems of conservation in European fishes or provide evidence of detailed studies having been carried out on threatened species. This lack of knowledge is reflected in the text. Very few species have specific explanations for declining populations other than general comments on environmental change. Canada, in contrast, has been well-served by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Their reports are much more detailed and field studies on various species have been funded to generate new and accurate data. Twenty-four Canadian fishes have been assigned a classification by COSEWIC, a further 30 are under review and a further 57 are listed as a potential interest. In contrast, the 1988 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals mentions only one fish species from Europe.

No species are illustrated. There are 94 species distribution maps. These are mainly shaded and give a general idea of European distribution. Some spot maps are misleading. The map for salmon on page 98, for example, has regularly spaced dots along the northwestern coast of Europe and cannot refer to collection records, the usual interpretation of a dot map. Given the long history of angling and fisheries research in Europe, surely it would have been possible to construct comparative maps of distribution over time as a vivid depiction of change.

The text is replete with spelling errors and not all papers referred to in the text appear in the Bibliography.

This book is the last volume of a series of which two others had appeared by mid-1990, Volume 1/I: Petromyzontiformes and Volume 1/II General Introduction to Fishes. Acipenseridae. It is based on a 1979 manuscript and the author admits that it was not thoroughly updated and that reference should be made to other volumes in the series. The previous two volumes contain more references, in some cases, for a single species than are given for all the 107 species covered here. Much of the text of the present volume is superfluous since classification, characters, distribution, and ecology are to be covered in the other volumes of the series or are readily available in other works. The economic importance sections of the first two volumes in the series have a much more detailed account of the status of the species they cover. This book should have been written last, benefiting from the detailed accounts in the other books in the series. It would then have been a convenient summary of the status of threatened fishes in Europe based on recent information. As it stands, it is out of date and can serve only as a cursory starting point for information on European threatened fishes.

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## **Birds of the Seward Peninsula, Alaska: Their Biogeography, Seasonality, and Natural History**

By Brina Kessel. 1989. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks. 330 pp., illus. U.S. \$34.95.

Before her first visit to the Seward Peninsula in 1966 the author was aware of the significance of the area for avifaunal studies. Its position on the west-central coast of Alaska made the Peninsula

important to migrating and breeding birds from at least four continents. The area's variety of habitats, from open saltwater to dry alpine summits, suggested an impressive diversity of species. In fact over one-half of all species known to occur in Alaska have been found on the Seward Peninsula. And the zoogeographic affinities of the Peninsula,





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